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SUBJECT: THAI MFA FACT SHEET ON DECEMBER 31 BANGKOK BOMBINGS

¶1. On January 1, the Thai MFA circulated a diplomatic note to all diplomatic missions and organizations, providing a summary of what it termed the facts surrounding the December 31 bombings, as well as the gist of Prime Minister Surayud's January 1 press briefing. We note that casualty figures in the note diverge slightly from those in more recent press reports. The text of the note follows.

BEGIN TEXT

BOMB ATTACKS IN BANGKOK ON 31 DECEMBER 2006

On 31 December 2006 around 18.00 hrs and around midnight, a series of bomb attacks took place at eight separate locations in Bangkok and Nonthaburi, namely: a bus stop at the Victory Monument, Saphan Khwai Intersection, Sukhumvit 62, Khlong Toei wet market, Khae Lai Intersection, the parking area of Seacon Square Mall, a telephone booth in front of Arnoma Hotel near Gaysorn Plaza, and a boat pier on Saen Saep Canal near Central World Plaza. The latter two explosions took place around midnight. The incidents have caused a total of three deaths -- all Thai nationals -- and 32 injured victims, including six foreign nationals (two Britons, two Serbs, one Hungarians and one Irish). It is also worth noting that the locations targeted in the attacks were exclusively those which are normally frequented by Thai people.

Today (1 January) at 12.25 hrs., having convened a high-level meeting of security agencies at the headquarters of the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC), His Excellency Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont briefed the press on the bomb attacks and answered questions from journalists. The gist of the Prime Minister's briefing is as follows:

¶1. The perpetrators of these attacks are people who harbour malice and ill will towards the country. They aim to create political impact by instigating a sense of political instability. These people are to be condemned for having no regard to the lives and safety of Thai people. To disrupt the festive mood of the New Year Celebrations with these cowardly acts of violence, their purpose was to demoralize and undermine the confidence of our people.

¶2. The Government deeply regrets the incidents which took place despite the necessary precautionary measures taken. The Government extends its heartfelt condolences to the victims and the families of those who lost their lives and will provide them with care and support.

¶3. As for our foreign visitors who have been injured, the Government, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will work

with their Embassies in Bangkok on the alleviation of their situation.

¶4. The Prime Minister expressed appreciation to the private sector and government agencies for their cooperation in calling off the planned New Year events. Such cooperation has helped to prevent any further loss that could otherwise have happened. He also expressed appreciation to the hospitals which have provided medical treatment for victims of the attacks.

¶5. The Government asks all authorities concerned to ensure the safety for the people who would be traveling back from their vacations on Monday and Tuesday and to safeguard the security of the places which might be targeted. People are also asked to be vigilant and to help report on suspicious activities and objects.

¶6. The ISOC would serve as a focal point for receiving information and keeping the public informed of the situation and matters related to the safety and security of lives and properties.

¶7. The Prime Minister assures the people that the Government would do its utmost to control the situation and provide security in public places that might be targeted by ill-intentioned people.

¶8. During the Q and A session, the Prime Minister responded to the questions raised by the press. Salient points are as follows:

Q: Did the Government know who was behind the bomb attacks and did they have any link with situation in the south of

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Thailand?

¶A. Based on evidence gathered by the intelligence units so far, the bomb attacks had to do with groups who have been dispossessed politically. These were not necessarily confined to members of the previous Government but generally might include others who felt supplanted politically. However, it cannot as yet be ascertained which precise groups were involved.

¶Q. Were the bomb attacks linked to the situation in the South?

¶A. It was not thought likely that the incidents had link with the situation in the South.

¶Q. Are there additional security measures in place for the general public?

¶A. In addition to the measures already in place, the Government would like to ask for cooperation from the public in monitoring and reporting suspicious activities in public places such as bus terminals, train, MRT and BTS stations.

¶Q. Will the perpetrators be apprehended?

¶A. All concerned officials are tirelessly working towards that end. Evidence, especially forensic evidence, are being gathered and analyzed.

¶Q. What are the objectives of those groups with domestic political motives?

¶A. It is obvious that their objective is to bring about chaos undermining public morale and confidence in the State's ability to control the situation.

¶Q. Can intelligence sources identify who was behind these bomb attacks?

¶A. We cannot yet say definitively who was behind these incidents.

¶Q. How does the Government assess the implications of these events given that people and tourists have been demoralized and chosen to stay home?

¶A. The Government is closely monitoring the situation and is making every effort to protect the lives and properties of the people. The general public is asked to help in this task by reporting suspicious objects or activities to the police or state officials.

¶Q. Can these bomb attacks be considered successful in discrediting the Government as well as the Council for National Security?

¶A. In the overall picture, these incidents have inflicted damage to the nation as a whole.

¶Q. On what evidence does the Government base its assumption that this series of incidents was caused by groups who have been dispossessed politically?

¶A. At this stage, it is a proposition based on the preliminary assessment of the intelligence agencies. It was not his (the Prime Minister's) place to give a ruling on the matter. However, it can clearly be seen from what happened -- the modus operandi of the attacks, the chosen time and places -- that those who caused these incidents intended to create confusion and panic among the people. They intentionally did these on New Year's Eve when maximum impact would be created.

Department of Information
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
1 January 2007

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